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CIA/ORD CB 64-9
March 1964

NAVIGABILITY OF THE SONG GIANH AND OVERLAND CONNECTIONS WITH ROUTE 12

The Song Gianh is formed at the confluence of the lower reaches of two streams, the Rao May and the Song Troc, as they flow from the mountains across the narrow coastal plain. Both the Rao May and the Song Troc are characterized by silting, shifting channels, shoals, sandbars, numerous islands downstream, and rapids upstream. Navigation is possible for some distances upstream, but only with local piloting knowledge.

The Song Gianh, where it empties into the Gulf of Tonkin, is fronted by a steep-to bar 1/2 nautical mile in width. Shoals covered by less than 6 feet of water extend out from points on either side of the mouth of the river. The entrance channel is marked by buoys and, according to navigational instructions dated 1957, is deep enough to permit vessels with drafts of 6 feet to cross the bar at half tide. Patrol boats of the North Vietnamese Navy, which draw 6 feet, are stationed at Quang Khe, a minor port and naval base on the south bank of the river about 7 kilometers from the mouth. Presumably they have free access, even at low tide, to the harbor area across the bar.

Inside the bar, depths of the Song Gianh increase to 26 to 36 feet. The depth off Quang Khe is given as 36 feet. Naval patrol boats are known to have been stationed at Ba Don, a village on the north bank of the Rao May approximately 9 to 10 kilometers upriver from Quang Khe. Safe draft of 8 feet can be had for about 24 kilometers upstream from the mouth of the Song Gianh to the village of Tien Lang on the Rao May. Beyond Tien Lang there is a safe draft of 4-3/4 feet to Hung Bo, approximately 16 kilometers farther upstream. These depths can easily accommodate cargo-carrying sampans, which, even loaded, normally draw only 2-1/2 to 3-1/4 feet.

Upstream from Hung Bo the Rao May has a safe draft of 2-1/2 feet as far as Khe Net, approximately 34 kilometers from the coast. An obstacle to some boats is a fixed-span railroad bridge at Tan Minh Phuong, about 69 kilometers from the mouth of the river. The bridge is 424 feet long; no information is available on its vertical clearance. Farther upstream a series of rapids precludes waterborne transportation between Khe Net and Route 12.

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The Song Troc is navigable by sampans upstream as far as Phuong Chay, 32 kilometers from its junction with the Rao Nay. The type of vessels that can be accommodated is limited by the mean-water clearance of 7.8 feet under the Cong Ha railroad bridge.

The most feasible transshipment point between the Song Gianh and Route 12 is at Hung Bo on the Rao Nay. An overland route extends from the ferry crossing on the south bank of the river along an all-weather road parallel to a dismantled railroad line toward the northwest for approximately 15 kilometers to the village of Tam Dong Phuong. West of this village the road has a dry-weather surface and follows a circuitous route through the mountains toward its junction with Route 12 near Xom Thanh. The last stretch of 4 to 5 kilometers before the junction with Route 12 is classed as track or trail.

Minor trails connect transshipment points on the Song Troc with the road from Hung Bo to Route 12. The trails are probably not motorable, however, and would entail longer portages than the route described above.

Attachments:

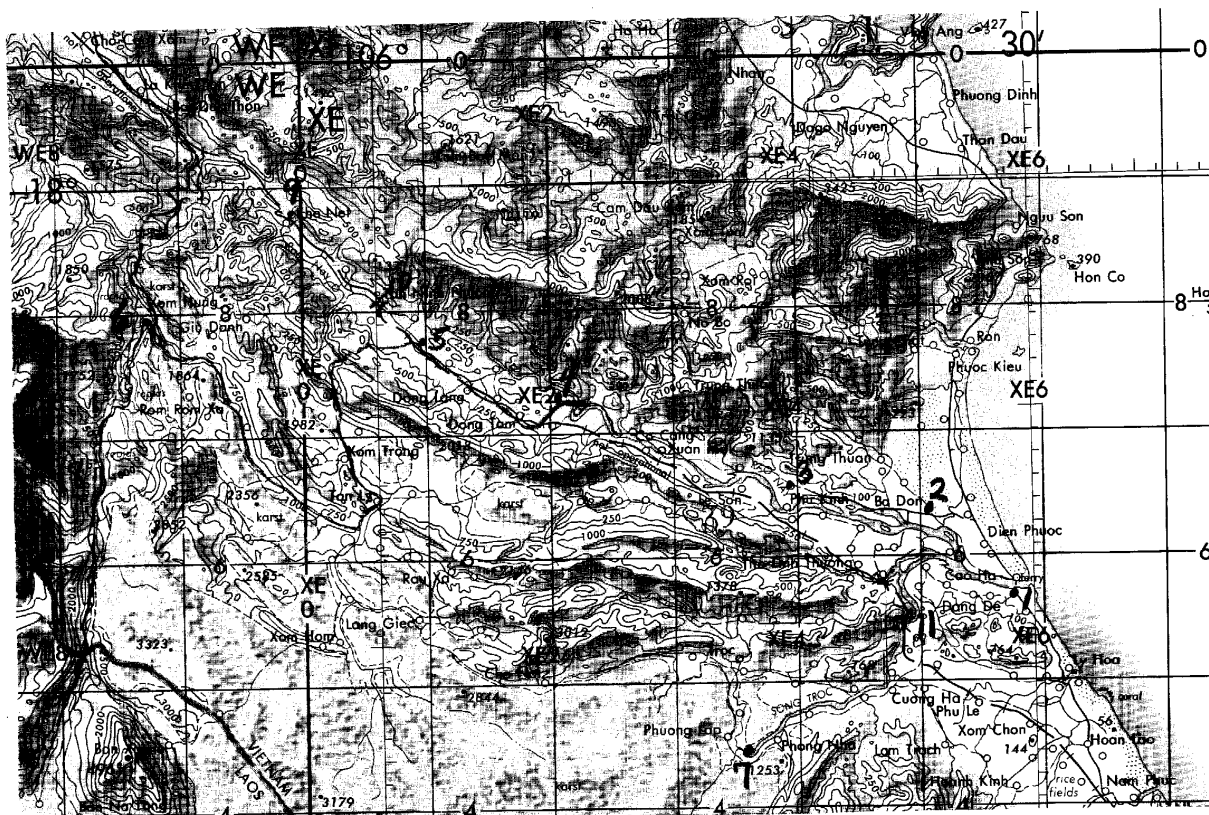
Two manuscript maps --
Song Gianh Drainage Area and



- 2 -

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SONG GIANG DRAINAGE AREA



LEGEND

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Quang Khe | 7. Phuong Chay |
| 2. Badon | 8. Route 12 |
| 3. Tien Lang | 9. Khe Net |
| 4. Hung Bo | 10. Fixed-span railroad bridge |
| 5. Tam Dong Phuong | 11. Cong Ha railroad bridge |
| 6. Xom Thanh | |

STATINTL

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Control

Requester [REDACTED] MS/TR/RR 25X1A

SENSITIVE

Analyst/Branch [REDACTED] GG/F
25X1A

*
Graphics

Ms maps:
Song Gianh Drainage Area
Song Gianh and Lower Reaches
of the Rao Nay and the
Song Troc

Copy No.

To

Date

1 - 2 Requester (with one copy each of the two maps)

26 March 64

3 Ch/G (with D/GG's copies of maps -- to be returned)

4 GG/F (with one copy each of the two maps)

5 D/GG ditto

6 [REDACTED] via R/P/C/R

29 June 65

25X1A

Remarks: * only three copies of maps prepared

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